Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources
Annual Accountability Report
2000-2001 Fiscal Year

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Table of Contents

1. Accountability Statement 1

2. Message From The Minister 2

3. Impact of Government Restructuring 2

4. Department Accomplishments 3
   Goal 1 - Achieve Sound Natural Resources Stewardship and Sustainable Development 3
   Goal 2 - Maintain the Diversity of the Province's Natural Environment 7
   Goal 3 - Enhance the Economic Base for Jobs and Incomes in Nova Scotia 9
   Goal 4 - Improve the Quality of Life for Nova Scotians 12
   Goal 5 - Ensure the Effective Use of our Human and Financial Resources 13
   Human Resources Priorities 16
   Information Technology Priorities 18
   Financial Services Priorities 20

5. Financial Results 21

6. Supplemental Information 22

1. Accountability Statement

The accountability report of the Department of Natural Resources for the year ended March 31, 2001 is prepared pursuant to the Financial Measures Act (2000). The Act requires the reporting of outcomes against department business plan information for the fiscal year. The reporting of department outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by department management.

We acknowledge that this accountability report is the responsibility of department management. The report represents, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Department business plan for the year.

Minister _____ Deputy Minister _____

2. Message From The Minister

The Department's Annual Accountability Report for the year ended March 31, 2001 was prepared under my direction on behalf of the Department. In keeping with the Government's goal of responsible and accountable governance, we are providing a report, along with every other department, to show our performance during the past fiscal year. This is the Department's first accountability report mandated under the Financial Measures Act of 2000. This report provides Nova Scotians with the opportunity to see if we accomplished what we said we would do in our 2000-2001 Business Plan.

Although the fiscal restraint initiatives required across government presented special challenges for the Department, there were several significant accomplishments during the year that I would like to specifically mention. These are:

- the beginning of a process to prepare an updated Energy Strategy for the province, which will provide a plan stakeholders will be able to use when making energy related decisions;
- the activities related to the Province's participation in the National Climate Change Process;
- the amendments to the Forest Act, which are intended to ensure the long term sustainability of our forests; and
- the work done as part of the integrated resource management planning process for Crown lands, which minimizes conflicts among users and optimizes long term sustainable benefits for all Nova Scotians.

3. Impact of Government Restructuring

The review of programs in the Fall of 1999 identified 58 programs for the Department. As a result of the review, several programs, or components of programs, were eliminated in 2000-2001. The eliminated programs (or program components) were:

- the fixed wing aircraft component of the Aviation Services Program;
- the Dog Services component of the Enforcement of Acts and Regulations Program;
- the second generation planting component of the Tree Breeding Program;
- the Nuisance Wildlife Control Program; and
- the Natural Resources Advisory Council.

Of the remaining programs, another 29, or just over half, had the level of funding and/or staffing reduced. These eliminations and reductions resulted in savings of just over $5.3 million and 72.4 full time equivalents (FTEs).

The following two proposals were identified at the beginning of 2000-2001 as part of government's program analysis and review:

- "(The) Provincial Parks system will continue to be devoted to nature oriented outdoor recreation, but parks operation and promotion will be moved to the Department of Tourism and Culture to allow the better integration of policies and programs dedicated to marketing Nova Scotia as a destination."; and
- "(The) Enforcement program will be relocated as a unit to the Department of Justice to better integrate the policing functions of government."

Teams reviewed the operations of both the Enforcement Program and the Parks Program to determine if savings could be achieved by moving them to other departments. The reviews found that both programs were cost effective in their current location at the Department of Natural Resources and that there would be no savings to taxpayers by transferring these programs to other departments. As a result, responsibility for fish and game law enforcement and for the management and operation of provincial parks remained with the Department of Natural Resources. The review of the Parks Program did identify opportunities to improve the market readiness of our provincially operated parks, and the Department of Natural Resources has been working with the Department of Tourism and Culture to take advantage of these opportunities.

Responsibility for the sale of hunting and fishing licenses was transferred from the Department of Natural Resources to Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations part way through the year. This allowed the sale of these licenses to be grouped with the sale of other licenses and permits at Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. The change had no effect on where licenses could be purchased across the province.

4. Department Accomplishments

The Department's 2000-2001 Business Plan identified the following five goals:

- achieve sound natural resources stewardship and sustainable development;
- maintain the diversity of the province's natural environment;
- enhance the economic base for jobs and incomes in Nova Scotia;
- improve the quality of life for Nova Scotians; and
- ensure the effective use of our human and financial resources.

The priorities that were identified in the 2000-2001 Business Plan, and some specific accomplishments for each priority, are provided below.

Goal 1 - Achieve Sound Natural Resources Stewardship and Sustainable Development

Priority - Implement amendments to the Forests Act and new regulations to ensure Nova Scotia forests are sustainable. These provide for increased silviculture on private lands, better information on harvesting and production levels, and new management practices.

Accomplishments - Amendments to the Forests Act were proclaimed. The Forest Sustainability Regulations were proclaimed. The Forest Sustainability Fund was established under the Finance Act. The first Registered Buyers report was published. The Forest Technical Advisory Committee was established and became active. Discussions took place with the forest industry on the proposed wildlife habitat regulations.

Priority - Provide provincial information for Canada's second report on the Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management in Canada, which is being prepared under the auspices of the Canadian Council of Forestry Ministers (CCFM).

Accomplishments - The second Canadian report was published.

Priority - Initiate and coordinate joint stewardship agreements with industry and landowners that generate public and private funding for private land silviculture activities.

Accomplishments - Fourteen stewardship programs (both regulatory and voluntary) were in operation. The Province funded a 'Pilot Program' with the Association of Sustainable Forestry, which is a joint venture by woodlot owner and industry associations.

Priority - Work with Natural Resources Canada, other federal and provincial departments, and other coastal provinces towards the development of a regulatory regime for the recovery of sea floor mineral resources in the Nova Scotia offshore.

Accomplishments - Nova Scotia participated in a multi stakeholder process with Natural Resources Canada and other coastal provinces to work towards a regulatory regime for the development of offshore minerals. Natural Resources Canada was the lead agency and we continue to help plan the way forward and respond to ongoing work on this issue. Activities during 2000-2001 included the final preparation and review of consultants' reports on technical aspects of offshore mining and options for a consultation process.

Priority - Develop updated provincial energy and climate change strategies to guide decisions and actions that affect the future production and use of energy in the province.

Accomplishments - An Energy Strategy Team, made up of members from DNR and the Petroleum Directorate, was put in place in late 2000 to guide the energy strategy process. Initial planning and research started in early 2001 and led to the preparation, approval by Ministers, and release of a discussion document in late March 2001, which was circulated publicly. A communications and consultation plan was prepared and planning begun for public

consultations, to be held across the province later in 2001. (The strategy is targeted for completion late in 2001.) An Interdepartmental Committee on Climate Change completed drafting the Climate Change Strategy. At year end, it was being reviewed by the Energy Strategy Team and being prepared for consideration by Cabinet. At the national level, ministers of energy and environment endorsed the National Implementation Strategy on Climate Change and the First National Business Plan on Climate Change. The national strategy and business plan includes a commitment by Nova Scotia to a national approach and to undertake a set of specific actions aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which focus on energy efficiency and public education.

Priority - Produce and release a Provincial State of the Forest report and assist with the second State of the Environment Report (for Nova Scotia) on land related matters. These reports provide a public reporting system that .documents and evaluates the health of the forest and the environment and reports how they are being changed as a result of human activities.

Accomplishments - The State of the Forest Report is one of the nine elements of the new Forest Strategy. Preparation of a State of the Forest Report is still planned but it will not be completed until the other elements of the Strategy are implemented. A sustainable wood supply analysis was prepared and released. The State of the Environment Report project was suspended by the Department of Environment and Labour.

Priority - Respond to information and research requests which result from the ongoing claims over aboriginal land and resources and the court cases involving these claims.

Accomplishments - Specific requests for information and research were met throughout the year. In addition, the Crown Lands Record Centre embarked on a unique research project to assess the Crown grant information to allow for easier analysis of possible land claims by departmental clients, including Aboriginal peoples. Administration of this project began in October 2000 with the formulation of a Project Business Plan and addressed staffing, resources and strategy required to proceed with this task. Using a combination of conventional research procedures, scanning of old archival documents, and development of an electronic database to house the research data, a history of settlement patterns throughout Nova Scotia will be developed for future consideration and reference.

Priority - Continue to enforce compliance under the Wildlife Act, Beaches Act, Crown Lands Act, Forests Act, Trails Act, Parks Act, Wilderness Protection Act, and Angling Act, among others.

Accomplishments - During 2000-2001, enforcement staff monitored compliance of the Department's Forest Strategy to ensure sound forest practices and information gathering. The Department also delivered inland fishery and migratory birds enforcement services through the renewal of contract services with what is now the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, and

Environment Canada. These initiatives resulted in a number of joint forces operations combining officers from DNR and a number of other enforcement agencies. The Enforcement Program continued to receive support and positive feedback from the Federation of Hunters and Anglers during 2000-2001. The Federation recognized the professionalism and dedication of our enforcement staff in providing sound resource protection. Staff also participated, both nationally and internationally, in the development of resource protection programs and training standards for enforcement personnel. The Enforcement Program continued to undertake Special Investigations work and conducted a number of covert operations, both inside the province and nationally.

Priority - Continue implementing the action plan for the Province's mineral policy to ensure that the Department's programs are focused on supporting and encouraging economic development related to the use of our geological resources.

Accomplishments - Annual business and project plans were developed that reflected and provided support to exploration and mineral development opportunities in the Province. DNR worked closely with proponents of a number of potential new mining projects, including Black Bull Resources, who are developing a kaolin-quartz deposit in Yarmouth County, and NAR Resources, who are investigating titanium-bearing sands in the Shubenacadie River area.

Priority - Implement the Nova Scotia Action Plan that adopts sustainable forest management and implements the updated National Forest Strategy. This Action Plan will meet the Province's commitment as a signatory to the second Canada Forest Accord.

Accomplishments - Many commitments made under the National Forest Strategy were implemented, including:

- Youth Education programs, including visits to schools during National Forests, Wildlife and Mining Weeks, to deliver a sustainable development of natural resources message;
- the provision of responses by Department staff to general inquiries/complaints about all departmental programs; and
- the provision of technology transfers to the small woodlot sector, including home study courses and field days related to woodlot management and the Woodlot Owner of the Year Award program.

A mid-term evaluation of the National Forest Strategy, which was coordinated by Voluntary Planning, was carried out. The evaluation was completed with positive results for all components of the Nova Scotia Action Plan. In addition, Nova Scotia is represented on the executive committee that is designing the next National Forest Strategy.

Priority - Monitor wildlife populations to ensure that the principles of conservation and sustainable use are realized and evaluate the current system for harvesting moose in Cape Breton.

Accomplishments - Many wildlife population surveys were carried out. Bear data was collected on hunter effort/success and age/sex profile of harvested animals through mandatory hunter reporting and jaw submission. The size of the deer herd was monitored through spring pellet group inventory; condition/reproduction through the Wildlife Investigation Reports (WIR) program and antler measurements submitted by hunters; and the size of harvest through compulsory registration by successful hunters. The mainland moose herd was monitored by spring pellet group inventories, reported observations and aerial surveys; ongoing research into herd status, mortality factors and habitat suitability. The Cape Breton moose population was monitored by joint research projects and population surveys with Parks Canada; and compulsory reporting / biological samples provided by licensed hunters. The general status assessment of over 750 species of wildlife was completed. This forms the basis of a new provincial and national wildlife monitoring system. Inventories of freshwater mussels and rare plants were conducted. The populations of species at risk, including the piping plover, peregrine falcon and roseate tern, were monitored. Participated in the annual Woodcock Singing Ground Survey designed to monitor populations' trends. Banding of adult male and female Common Eider to estimate survival rates. Mandatory fur harvester returns including catch and abundance ranking by species. Mandatory carcass collections for otter and fisher to monitor age, sex and reproductive status. Pellet group inventories for snowshoe hare, aerial surveys for beaver and cock crowing census for pheasants. Upland game harvest surveys and abundance rankings.

Priority - Complete strategic land use plans for Crown lands using the integrated resource management planning process, and begin developing long range management plans that conform with these strategic plans.

Accomplishments - In September 2000, DNR held 24 public information sessions across the province to view the proposed Integrated Resource Management (IRM) Regional Strategic Plans. Input and feedback was collected at these sessions and, in some cases, led to changes to the Strategies. The proposed IRM Regional Strategic Plans were completed and will remain in draft form until approval is received to proceed to the next phase. With a proposed Strategy in place, the Department initiated preliminary work on the next phase. This work encompasses the preparation of more detailed long range management plans (LRMP) which outline how Crown land resources, on a defined area are to be managed. Preliminary work included developing a model to define a process, and outlining the components of the LRMP. As part of this next step, the Department has now incorporated other government departments and agencies into the IRM process through the establishment of an IRM Interdepartmental Advisory Committee.

Goal 2 - Maintain the Diversity of the Province's Natural Environment

Priority - Continue programs, policy and legislation for the conservation of biodiversity, including implementation of the National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk. This will be done by implementing the Nova Scotia Endangered Species Act, initiating recovery plans for endangered and threatened species, and reporting on the status of wildlife in Nova Scotia. A

Species at Risk Working Group has been appointed, which will provide expert scientific information on animals, plants, and conservation biology, and will develop the province's list of endangered species.

Accomplishments - The Species at Risk Working Group, required under the Endangered Species Act, met to consider listings under the Act. Ten species of wildlife were listed as species at risk. Recovery teams and plans are underway for these species at risk. DNR maintained ongoing programs for the recovery of species at risk and continued to move forward on the planning and implementation of the Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk. DNR initiated a program for the conservation and recovery of Nova Scotia populations of American Marten and Lynx.

Priority - Provide a description of the province's ecological regions to guide ecologically based forest management by government and industry. This is consistent with the National Forest Accord and forms the basis for the Department's Integrated Resource Management initiative.

Accomplishments - The ecosystem classification system was developed and implemented for two levels in the system. There are five levels of hierarchy, based on scale, within the ecological land classification (ELC) system. The two levels developed were the "eco-region" (nine across Nova Scotia) and the "eco-district" (38 across Nova Scotia). These classifications define units of land from an ecological perspective and tie in to biodiversity and ecosystem management. Each layer is based on the natural system factors that affect it, including soils, geology, biology, and climate.

Priority - Participate in the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture, the Black Duck Joint Venture and the Sea Duck Joint Venture as part of Nova Scotia's commitment to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

Accomplishments - The NS Eastern Habitat Joint Venture delivered a $825,000 program for wetland conservation, with more than 85% of the funding from sources outside of the Nova Scotia government. DNR staff actively participated in the planning and delivery of components of the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture, Black Duck Joint Venture, and Sea Duck Joint Venture. Funding proposals were submitted to support activities of the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture for wetlands conservation and management ($1,369,000) and Shorebird Conservation ($946,000). Respectively, approximately 90% and 95% of the requested funding was from sources outside of the Nova Scotia government.

Priority - Monitor forest conditions and threats to the forest (fire, insects and disease), and implement suitable strategies to protect the province's forest resources.

Accomplishments - DNR continuously monitors forest conditions for fires, insects, and diseases. During the 2000 fire season, 210 fires burned 489.4 hectares, which is the lowest

number of fire starts in recent history (the 10 year average is 398 fires and 845 hectares). Our largest fire occurred on June 21, 2000 within the Halifax Regional Municipality. Several agencies dealt with this fire, which eventually grew to be 190 hectares and forced the evacuation of 150 homes. One particular concern was the discovery of the Brown Spruce Longhorn Beetle in Point Pleasant Park. The Department, the Canadian Forest Service (CFS), Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) worked together to deal with this infestation. DNR's role included assisting the other agencies as necessary, and carrying out surveys (both aerial and ground) outside the park to determine if the insect had spread beyond the boundaries of Point Pleasant Park. The Department and the Office of the Fire Marshall hosted the first ever National Interface Fires 2000 Conference, which was held in Halifax in May 2000. This conference brought together various agencies with the common goal of reducing the impacts of fires in the wildland/urban interface.

Priority - Initiate a comprehensive review of the Beaches Act to develop recommended amendments to this legislation. The Departments of Natural Resources and the Environment will undertake the review jointly.

Accomplishments - The review was deferred until 2001-2002 for several reasons. Other pressing issues arose which required attention, and few new beaches were being designated. The review is still planned and was identified as a priority in the Department's 2001-2002 Business Plan.

Goal 3 - Enhance the Economic Base for Jobs and Incomes in Nova Scotia

Priority - Implement multi-disciplinary geoscience programs and undertake targeted promotion of the province's mineral resources to increase the level of exploration and work cooperatively with industry, other departments and community development groups to encourage appropriate development opportunities.

Accomplishments - DNR worked closely with the Strait-Highlands Regional Development Agency to promote mineral development in Cape Breton Island, and interacted with the Nova Scotia Chamber of Mineral Resources and the Nova Scotia Mining Society to raise public awareness of the province's mineral industry.

Priority - Work with the federal government to encourage appropriate taxation and expenditure policies that provide a business climate conducive to natural resources industries.

Accomplishments - DNR worked with counterparts in other provinces and territories to support industry efforts for federal action to initiate an enhanced flow-through share program. This program was announced in October 2000, and provides a 15% non-refundable federal tax credit for eligible investments in mineral exploration. DNR has initiated discussions with the Department of Finance to evaluate the potential benefits of a complementary tax credit at the

provincial level, similar to those implemented by several other provinces following the Federal announcement.

Priority - Jointly with Aboriginal Affairs, continue discussions with Mi'kmaq representatives about access to Crown lands for hunting and gathering activities as referenced in the recent court decision concerning treaty rights.

Accomplishments - The Department works cooperatively with the Office of Aboriginal Affairs and has participated in all working groups set up by them. On issues related to hunting and other resource use, the Department informs the aboriginal communities of all changes and/or proposed changes to provincial Acts and regulations and has agreed to meet to review more critical issues, such as those related to Cape Breton Highlands moose management. All such direct contact is again coordinated with the Office of Aboriginal Affairs.

Priority - Encourage appropriate private sector development of natural resources on Crown lands while ensuring it is done in a responsible and environmentally sound manner that preserves the ecological integrity, recreational opportunities and sustainable resource use. This includes forest harvesting and silviculture, development of peatland and aggregate resources, general recreational activities, and the sale, trade or acquisition of Crown lands.

Accomplishment - The Department reviewed numerous development proposals for the use of Crown lands. Resource development proposals, and proposed land trades, land sales and land acquisitions were reviewed under the Integrated Resource Management (IRM) process. These reviews included considerations for the maintenance of ecological integrity, biodiversity, environmental protection, impacts on recreational activities, and a wide range of other resource values, including resource sustainability. The Department monitored the existing resource development and protection commitments on Crown lands for compliance with all provincial regulations, guidelines, standards, and contractual terms and conditions of operation on the Crown lands. The Department continued its geoscience project to inventory the province's aggregate resources, including those on Crown lands, and worked closely with provincial companies and municipal governments to identify and put into production aggregate pits and quarries for local markets.

Priority - Work with officials from the Cape Breton Development Corporation (CBDC), the federal government and other provincial departments to encourage the continuation of coal mining in Cape Breton as feasible, and to provide for satisfactory remediation of lands affected by coal mining within the boundary of the CBDC.

Accomplishments - DNR officials worked closely with CBDC officials (and continue to do so) to establish reclamation obligations and responsibilities that CBDC must address in the mining lease surrender requirements. DNR also worked on developing a procedure to provide fair and

equitable opportunities for any companies interested in future coal mining projects in the Sydney coalfield.

Priority - Provide assistance to resource industries through efforts to promote NS resources, identify value added opportunities and provide technical support to small businesses including woodlot owners, sawmills and prospectors.

Accomplishments - DNR has co-sponsored, with the Maritime Lumber Bureau, the testing of lumber properties for Norway Spruce lumber to seek acceptance under lumber grading rules. DNR has supported industry efforts to maintain access to US softwood lumber market. DNR operated the final year of the three year Prospectors Assistance Program. In 2000-2001, this program provided technical training to 62 prospectors, distributed assistance grants to 14 prospectors, and provided travel assistance for several prospectors to participate in two industry trade shows and conferences (three people to the Cordilleran Roundup in Vancouver, and four people to the Prospectors and Developers Association event in Toronto). Support was provided to the province's Christmas Tree industry, including field days, workshops, pesticide application certification, shearing, and grading courses, advice on cultural practices and pest/nutrient management, administration of the Nova Scotia Christmas Tree Grading Regulations, production of a revised Growers Manual, promotion, and provision of consumer information. Support provided to woodlot owners, including advice and support to forestry-related associations; educational materials/modules on sound forest management practices distributed to private woodlot owners in hardcopy and electronic formats; seminars on forest management issues provided to Woodlot Owners and Contractors as well as short courses and field days for woodlot owners throughout the fall/winter. A quarterly newsletter was provided to participants in courses and seminars, along with access to an electronic bulletin board service on the Department's website.

Priority - Help to promote Nova Scotia as a premier trails destination offering opportunities to experience our outstanding natural environment and strengthen our position as a coastal tourism destination.

Accomplishments - Designated the Amherst Shore Provincial Natural Environment Park. A Ministerial Advisory Committee for McNabs Island was established to develop a park management plan. Additional trails at Cape Chignecto Provincial Park were completed. Various community partnerships to continue park and trail development were established.

Priority - Participate in a national task group to review a new approach to forestry in Canada with the intention to negotiate a new federal/provincial Forestry Development Agreement.

Accomplishments - Participated in a CCFM work group for Forest 2020.

Goal 4 - Improve the Quality of Life for Nova Scotians

Priority - Maintain and operate park facilities, maintain park and trail infrastructure, improve access to park facilities and expand park and outdoor recreation experiences available to residents and visitors.

Accomplishments - Recreational programs operated included the Parks are for People program, which sponsored many activities in the provincial parks system, and the Campground Hosts program. Invested $320,000 in park facilities and infrastructure construction and upgrades, including: a new bridge at Rainbow Haven Park, a comfort station (showers, washrooms) at Salsman Park, the creation of additional campsites at Caribou Park, and retrofitting several buildings to a more modern standard.

Priority - Continue the development of a Forest Practices Code, which promotes sustainable forestry, integrated resource management, biodiversity and ecosystem based management, for use on Crown lands, and which can be used as a model by private land owners.

Accomplishments - The Forest Practices Code is one element of the new Forest Strategy. A Forest Practices Code proposal was developed and reviewed with the Forest Technical Advisory Committee. As the components of the Forest Strategy are implemented, additional resources will be devoted to the completion and implementation of the remaining elements, including the Forest Practices Code.

Priority - Initiate a program to reclaim abandoned mine openings on Crown land and provide information and advice on abandoned mines to private landowners.

Accomplishments - The Department, with Governor in Council approval, established a reclamation trust fund using residual funds from a past crown corporation. The Department also has a handbook, which is available to the public upon request, that outlines methods and procedures for fencing, covering, or filling open holes.

Priority - In conjunction with the federal government, develop and implement cost-effective energy efficiency and alternative energy programs that help meet Canada's international commitments to reduce greenhouse gases.

Accomplishments - Nova Scotia continues to be an active participant in the National Climate Change Process with the Federal Government. A number of cost shared projects were initialed or continued during 2000-2001, including:

- Public Education - a project to continue educational activities which inform the public about climate change and how they can help to reduce emissions.
- Voluntary Challenge and Registry - a project to allow industry in Nova Scotia to participate in the national process of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

- Baseline Protection Project - a project to allow industry to register their emission baseline and to record changes from emission reductions ensuring that they receive recognition when Canada commits to reductions under the Kyoto Protocol.

Priority - Continue to seek opportunities to partner with a broad range of organizations, agencies and community groups interested in improving outdoor recreational opportunities, nature based tourism, or conservation.

Accomplishments - Operated the Parks are for People Program and hosted a number of events in Provincial Parks. Continued a number of successful partnerships for park development (Cape Chignecto, McNabs Island, Thomas Raddall). New partnerships for the development of sections of abandoned rail corridor at various locations throughout the province were initiated. Supported the Nova Scotia Nature Trust in their efforts to conserve and establish stewardship programs for Coastal Plain Flora. Worked with the Grand Pre community to develop conservation action for the Minas Basin. Worked with the Nova Scotia Bird Society and Federal government to develop a volunteer Piping Plover Guardian Program. Worked with partners in the federal government to implement projects under the new Federal Species at Risk Stewardship Fund. Signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Acadia University to formalize and establish a partnership for wildlife conservation. Linkages were expanded with the Nature Conservancy of Canada to secure wildlife habitat for conservation. Through the Stewardship Program of the NS-Eastern Habitat Joint Venture, stewardship agreements were implemented with agriculturalists and a community-based river stewardship group. A cooperative program was undertaken with the Applied Geomatics Research Group of the Nova Scotia Community College to investigate the use of remote sensing technology for updating and monitoring the provincial wetland resource.

Priority - Work with the Department of Housing and Municipal Affairs to rationalize and improve the collection of information on non-resident land ownership.

Accomplishments - Staff participated in Registry 2000 which resulted in the inclusion of mechanisms to collect non-resident information in the proposed *Land Registration Act*; DNR assisted in project planning for completion by Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations' non-resident land ownership database based upon owner address information.

Priority - Introduce amendments to the Wildlife Act to legislate the right to hunt and fish in Nova Scotia and initiate an analysis of business opportunities to stimulate hunting activities, especially with out of province hunters.

Accomplishments - Research d legislation in other jurisdictions and examined options to legislate the right to hunt and fish.

Goal 5 - Ensure the Effective Use of our Human and Financial Resources

Priority - Realign its expenditures to maintain efforts devoted to programs supporting resource management and sustainable use, while reducing expenditures on administrative and other internal support operations and services where the private sector is able to take the initiative.

Accomplishments - As part of the program review and analysis exercise, reductions were made in a number of the Department's programs. As much as possible, these reductions occurred in administrative support areas.

Priority - Focus efforts on establishing standards, providing information and monitoring compliance, recognizing that industry can make its own decisions about the means to reach those standards. The department will maintain direct investment funding to the forest industry, and ensure it is used to increase the level of forest management and silviculture activities by the private sector.

Accomplishments - With the implementation of a new Forest Strategy, the Department has refocused its efforts from a directly funded and delivered private land silviculture program to an industry delivered and funded program, at a level required to ensure sustainable use. The Department has reorganized, towards now ensuring standards of treatments are being met, providing information, and monitoring for compliance with the new Forest Sustainability Regulations. The 2000-2001 year was the first year for full compliance under these new Regulations (all registered wood buyers with purchases over 5,000 cubic metres were required to conduct and/or fund a silviculture program). A new Forest Technical Advisory Committee, established to review and recommend necessary changes, met monthly through the year and has made several recommendations for future changes. Department staff have received training in the new roles and have begun the task of assessments and communicating directly with local industries. Work progressed on the remaining elements of the Forest Strategy, such as a Code of Forest Practices.

Priority - Identify and adopt opportunities where information technology can be used to reduce the cost of doing business or improve client service. This includes expanding the distribution of information by e-mail and on the Internet, and integrating information from various geographic information system databases within the department.

Accomplishments - Many projects were implemented with respect to this priority. Examples included:

- An expansion of the program to deliver geological information through the Internet. Seven new digital products, ranging from geological maps to digital databases, were made available as free downloads from the Branch website. The website recorded 8,920 downloads of its data products during the fiscal year.
- The full implementation of a computerized park reservation/registration system that allows reservations at our provincial campgrounds. An e-mail response protocol was developed to

support and manage parks related comments received through the Parks section of the Department's website.

- With the Federal government and other partners, completed the background work for the upcoming release of three new web pages addressing wildlife conservation issues (Atlantic Coastal Plain Conservation and Recovery Web Page, General Status of Wildlife Web Page and the Wild Species 2000 page).
- A contract with ESRI Canada was completed to mount the Significant Species and Habitats Database on the Department's website, which provides up to date mapped data used by several agencies for environmental planning.
- Implemented a system to allow the Internet be used for the reporting of fur harvest and upland game harvesting information.
- Work began to integrate the use of new ARC IMS software to permit efficient and easy Internet access by Department staff to the Crown Lands Property Records Database.
- The Department began a co-operative effort with Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations to merge the Crown and private property records databases into a single provincial property database with improved accuracy, integrity and currency of data and to provide single point access to all property data.
- The Daily Fire Weather Index (FWI) was made available on the DNR home page. This significantly reduced the time and cost of faxing the map to the media, industry and other agencies interested in the daily FWI.
- Information, educational material and resources about Nova Scotia's wildlife, products from a sustainable forest and forest management practices were made available on the website, which provided easier access for teachers, students, woodlot owners and other interested persons to access.
- A number of application forms were made available on the website, including forms for Hunter Education, booking trips to the DNR Education Centre, and nominations for the Woodlot Owner of the Year.

Priority - Identify and implement opportunities for efficiencies and improved service delivery through partnerships with, or purchases from, other departments or the private sector.

Accomplishments - Home Energy Action Tips (HEAT) was a project to provide Internet and telephone energy efficiency information to home owners to help reduce energy bills. This was a partnership project with DNR, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, and the Clean Nova Scotia Foundation. Weekly Fuel Price Information was an Internet based service to the public which reports the results of our weekly price survey for gasoline, diesel fuel and heating fuel. In November 2000, a partnership agreement was reached with the Nature Conservancy of Canada (through which one million dollars worth of conservation lands will be acquired for the Province in return for a contribution of $300,000). This partnership is referred to as the Campaign for Conservation. In addition, in-kind services were provided to the Nova Scotia Nature Trust in support of their efforts to secure ecologically significant lands, including a Wilderness Area inholding at Cloud Lake, Annapolis County. DNR, in cooperation with the private sector, has implemented an expanded level of Forest Sustainability Agreements with

respect to delivery of silviculture on woodlots within the province. Numerous partnerships were established for the development and implementation of extension programming.

Priority - Continue to develop and implement a comprehensive Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) program to ensure workplaces meet or exceed regulatory requirements and provide a healthy and safe working environment for staff.

Accomplishments - Work began on a review and update of the Department's OHS Policy and Program. Work continued on the preparation of Written Work Practices and Procedures, which provide direction on how staff can safely carry out various departmental tasks. The development and delivery of training for staff continued to be a priority, especially training related to the new Occupational Safety General Regulations which came into effective in 2000.

Priority - Implement any changes in accordance with contractual agreements, taking into consideration the principles of fairness and equity towards staff. Staff training requirements will be identified and training provided where staff can be reassigned.

Accomplishments - This was a difficult year as a number of positions in the Department were eliminated as a result of the program review and analysis. Staff who were affected were treated consistently based on contractual obligations and the conditions of the severance package negotiated between the Nova Scotia Government Employees Union and the Government.

Priority - Continue to facilitate efficient and effective reviews of mineral development projects through a coordinated "one-window" process, including the provision of scientific, technical and policy advice to other departments that are partners in the Memorandum of Understanding. The MOU will be revised to reflect the amendments made to the Mineral Resources Act so that changes in relationships between partners and shifts in responsibilities are fully recognized and implemented.

Accomplishments - A number of projects were reviewed under the One Window mine review process in 2000-2001. The One Window review committee reviewed all active mine projects in the province on a monthly basis. The Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Environment and Labour also began discussions towards a revised Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the One Window process in order to incorporate the legislative and organizational changes that took place during 2000-2001 in both departments.

Human Resources Priorities

Priority - Providing corporate consultative advice and assistance to the Department with regard to its strategic initiatives, restructuring efforts, organizational design and labor relations issues,

and providing guidance and support to Departmental Managers in Human Resource Planning, enhancing the Department's ability to meet goals and future challenges.

Accomplishments - Extensive consultation and assistance was provided with regard to these services, including considerable effort devoted to issues related to the restructuring initiative and realignment of the Department's Enforcement group. In addition, assistance was provided in relation to the Interface Fires 2000 Conference, which was held in May 2000.

Priority - Supporting the Corporate Integrated Management Development initiative by coordinating the Succession Planning and Performance Management processes within the Department. This includes providing ongoing consultative support to managers, as well as analytical and planning support to the Department throughout the process. Career planning will be provided in conjunction with this initiative.

Accomplishments - During 2000-2001, most efforts were focused on restructuring activities, rather than on succession planning. Extensive assistance/consulting regarding new performance management instrument was provided. A response was provided to each performance appraisal identifying assistance available with respect to identified developmental needs.

Priority - Providing quality, cost effective training and development opportunities and human resources programs customized to meet identified needs within the Department.

Accomplishments - Change Intervention workshops and Interview and Resume Writing courses and full day individual related assistance was provided for all levels of staff, across the Province to support the downsizing initiative. Training courses were delivered in different locations and to different staff, including Supervisory Development, Project Management, Train the Trainer for JOHS Committees, Strathlorne Intervention, Facilitation training, First Aid, and a number of other occupational health and safety related training courses.

Priority - Providing efficient personnel, payroll and benefit administration services for all Department employees.

Accomplishments - Services in this area extended beyond regular processes during 2000-2001 to include extensive and timely administrative services associated with the Transition Support program, placements and displacements of employees as a result of restructuring.

Priority - Streamlining the Disability Case Management process and continuing to provide related consultative and support services leading to improved employee morale and productivity.

Accomplishments - Issues were identified prior to employees going on leave due to illness and/or injuries wherever possible. Guidance was provided in ergonomics and stress related illness/injuries to prevent or correct situations, by intervening with training, recommendations

for ergonomic changes, and educating employees and managers on more constructive methods of dealing with employee mental health issues. Worked with physicians, management to develop return-to-work programs for either modified work or hours in cases where employees were unable to return to regular full-time duties.

Priority - Provide advice and assistance regarding Occupational Health and Safety Program changes which ensure compliance with related legislation and the provision of a safe and healthy workplace, and assisting management staff to prepare for Occupational Health and Safety audits by leading audit readiness exercises and follow ups in Department workplaces.

Accomplishments - Advice and recommendations were provided with respect to ongoing legislative changes. Led focus groups in the development of new policies and procedures such as Designated Competent Person in accordance with the Occupational Safety General Regulations. Actively participated in Departmental Advisory group. Led needs assessment to identify specific client OH&S training needs. Collaborated with clients to conduct inspections as required to ensure continued compliance.

Information Technology Priorities

Priority - Providing IT infrastructure requirements planning for the Department. This includes planning for hardware capacity, network capacity and data connectivity planning, system component specification planning and implementation scheduling.

Accomplishments - The network server in Founders Square was upgraded. Regular upgrades to network and desktop software were undertaken to ensure compatibility, stability, reliability, and desktop and network security.

Priority - Providing operational support for the operation of existing business applications, desktops systems, and local area networks. This includes providing telephone support through the RCSU Help Desk, supporting business applications, providing application enhancements, monitoring network operations, undertaking regular server data backups, acquiring and installing software, and fixing problems with desktop systems.

Accomplishments - The streamlining of Help Desk procedures continued in an effort to improve quality and timeliness of client service. Resources Corporate Services Unit - IT Division assumed management responsibility for regional support at the corporate level. Phase II of a project to provide expanded desktop support to regional offices across the province was completed. Customized IT training for department staff was provide for several common desktop applications for both head office and all regional offices across the province. Coordination and support was provided for web development standards, web training, and application development for the departmental web site.

Priority - Identifying new departmental IT initiatives. During 1999, most IT resources available to the Department were devoted to preparing the Department for the Year 2000. As a result, almost no new IT initiatives were undertaken. Beginning in 2000, the Department will be identifying, developing, and implementing IT projects that are departmental priorities. These projects will support priorities identified in Section 5.0 (which were the priorities for the Department's five goals).

Accomplishments - Staff worked with senior management in the department to ensure prioritization and alignment of IT projects with departmental business plans. IT consulting and advice and training was provided to Department staff. Support and system enhancements were provided for a number of business applications/initiatives, including the Wood Buyers Registry, Antlerless Deer Draw, Moose Licence Draw, Forest Inventory System (a re-write), the move of Licences to Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, and managing the Department's SUN Maintenance Agreement. Staff also participated and supported various internal committees related to information technology, information policy and management, and geographic information systems.

Priority - Modifying the Wood Buyers Registry system to include both system enhancements which have been identified, and additional system capabilities. The Wood Buyers Registry system supports the new approach to ensuring sustainable forests in the province and is used to maintain a record of wood buyer registration information.

Accomplishments - Business analysis and technical support was provided for the Forest Sustainability enhancements to the Wood Buyers Registry system. No implementation occurred because of revisions to the regulations.

Financial Services Priorities

Priority - Implementing the Tangible Capital Asset Policy. This policy will modify the manner in which government accounts for tangible capital assets. The accounting portion of this policy will be carried out through the asset management module of SAP.

Accomplishments - The new policy for Tangible Capital Assets was implemented, and the new method of accounting for certain capital assets was implemented.. This has affected the way DNR expenses the acquisition of vehicles and some major IT purchases such as servers.

Priority - Developing and implementing a policy for the use of debit and credit cards in government offices that provide goods and services to the public. This initiative will improve the ease with which the public can access and purchase government goods and services.

Accomplishments - No further progress has been made extending the use of debit and credit cards for the acquisition of goods and services. The use of debit cards was not feasible due to the limited volume of transactions and/or inadequate infrastructure to support their use in many offices. DNR continues to use credit cards for the acquisition of gas province-wide and for purchases made at Canadian Tire, Staples, etc.

Priority - Continuing to improve the reporting capability of the provincial Central Financial Management System. Improvements to existing financial reports and the creation of new ones will improve the financial information available to civil servants.

Accomplishments - A new Salary Analysis System (SAS) was implemented. This corporate system provides the shell for all salary information required to prepare and maintain the budget of departments. It has enabled the provision of more accurate and up-to-date salary information to departmental staff.

Priority - Demonstrating leadership in the "Buy Nova Scotia First Program" by ensuring government tendering policies (practiced by the Resource Departments) allow Nova Scotian companies to compete fairly for government business.

Accomplishments - The Procurement Policy, dated January 26, 2001, Section 11 refers to the fair treatment of Nova Scotian suppliers. The thresholds adhered to by DNR support the acquisition of goods and services on a local level where the total cost is less than $1,000.

5. Financial Results

The Department's 2000-2001 net program expenditure estimate (after chargeables, fees and recoveries) was $52.1 million. Actual expenditures for the same period were $50.9 million. Actual expenditures were approximately 2.3% less than estimated expenditures.

Actual expenditures were less than estimated expenditures during the year for several reasons including:

- weather conditions that resulted in fewer forest fires in the spring and summer and which restricted the amount of forestry work done in the winter;
- several unexpected cost recoveries which were used to offset program costs; and
- the implementation of an expenditure control program part way through the year which resulted in reduced travel and savings in operational expenditures.

6. Supplemental Information

The Department of Natural Resources has broad responsibilities relative to the development, management, conservation and protection of energy, forest, mineral, parks and wildlife resources, and the management of Crown lands. Nova Scotia's natural resources provide significant economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits for all Nova Scotians, and especially to the rural parts of the province.. Our natural resources are one of the province's features that make it an attractive place to live, do business in, and visit. It is our responsibility to ensure that they are managed wisely and Nova Scotians recognize the value and importance of our natural resources.

One of the major challenges the natural resources sector must deal with is the widely held, but inaccurate, perception that the sector is a dying part of the "old economy". Reports produced by other sectors frequently provide comparisons with resource based industries to show how these other sectors are growing while resource based industries are fading away. These comparisons are normally misleading because only the actual production of resources is included. Numerous other activities, such as those related to resource exploration, processing, manufacturing, transportation, construction, and resource industry supply, are often ignored.

Nova Scotia has a combination of a strong resource base and a good business climate. Resource-based industries have always contributed to the economy of this province, and will continue to do so in the future. Even through we may not be aware of it, most things in our daily lives are connected in one way or another to the use of natural resources. These resource-based industries are particularly valuable for their economic contributions and support for our rural communities.

Contrary to commonly held views, resource-based industries in Nova Scotia are modern, capital intensive industries. The resource sector is now utilizing new technologies that are on the cutting edge, world-wide. These industries rely on sophisticated, automated, computerized machinery and equipment. The use of new technology leads to a more efficient use of resources, a better product, and an improvement in the industry's overall performance. As the further commercialization of technological advances occurs, other uses may also be identified for some of the province's traditional resources, which could lead to further employment opportunities and economic growth. In addition, many of these jobs offer high rates of pay and require specialized skills and training.

The following two tables show Statistics Canada's estimates of average weekly wages for all employees in various sectors of the economy. The first table shows weekly earnings from industries related to forestry and mining production, manufacturing and distribution. For comparison purposes, the second table provides comparable weekly earnings data for a range of other industries in the province. The industry classifications provided in the tables are based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

Table 1 - Estimates of Average Earnings (Including Overtime), All Employees for 2000 (Industries Related to Forestry and Mining Production, Manufacturing and Distribution)		
NAICS	Industry	Weekly
1133	Logging	$574.91
212	Mining	$865.19
2121	Coal Mining	$836.28
3211	Sawmills and Wood Preservation	$594.04
3221	Pulp, Paper & Paperboard Mills	$1,107.99
3273	Cement & Concrete Products Manufacturing	$738.12
3279	Other Non-metallic Mineral Product Manufacturing	$698.66
4163	Lumber, Millwork & Other Building Supplies Wholesale-Distribution	$724.95
4172	Industrial Machinery Equipment & Supplies Wholesale-Distribution	$808.41
4182	Paper, Paper Products & Disposable Plastic Product Wholesale-Distribution	$982.21
Source: Annual Estimates of Employment, Earnings and Hours, 1991-2000, Statistics Canada		

Table 2 - Estimates of Average Earnings (Including Overtime), All Employees for 2000 (Professional, Educational, Health Care, Culture / Tourism Related, Public Administration)		
NAICS	Industry	Weekly
54	Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	$915.02
61	Educational Services	$607.59
62	Health Care & Social Assistance	$525.72
711	Performing Arts, Spectator Sports & Related Industries	$306.05
712	Heritage Institutions	$375.46
721	Accommodation Services	$283.81
722	Food Services & Drinking Places	$223.05
911	Federal Government Public Administration	$795.02
912	Provincial & Territorial Public Administration	$641.65
Source: Annual Estimates of Employment, Earnings and Hours, 1991-2000, Statistics Canada		

The following table shows the value of exports of mineral and forestry products in 2000. These products accounted for over $2 billion in merchandise exports, approximately 40% of all provincial exports. (Note that these exports are shipments of goods to other countries. Services and shipments to other provinces are not included.)

Table 3 - Nova Scotia Merchandise Exports - 2000		
Commodities	Dollars	Percent
Crude Wood Products	$21,470,571	0.4%
Non-Metallic Minerals, Mineral Fuels	$939,933,945	18.3%
Metallic Ores & Scrape	$380,088	0.0%
Lumber	$241,662,566	4.7%
Other Wood Fabricated Materials	$34,229,212	0.7%
Wood Pulp & Similar Pulp	$246,708,984	4.8%
Paper & Paperboard	$540,112,068	10.5%
Non-Metallic Mineral Basic Products	$14,935,764	0.3%
Sub-Total - Forestry and Mineral Related Products	$2,039,433,198	39.8%
Sub-Total - All Other Products	$3,089,894,485	60.2%
Total - All Exports	$5,129,327,683	100.0%

Source: Statistics Canada Catalogue Number 65C0003, International Trade Information Requests. Obtained from the Nova Scotia Department of Finance.

Note: Shares of individual commodities may not sum to the sub-total figure due to rounding errors.